

California BLM Guidelines for a Cultural Resources Inventory

These guidelines are intended to meet California Bureau of Land Management's responsibilities for cultural resources inventories under the Protocol Agreement with the California and Nevada State Historic Preservation Officers for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Protocol Agreement). These guidelines have been developed utilizing the direction outlined in BLM Manual 8110, Identifying and Evaluating Cultural Resources; the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Identification; and, National Register Bulletin 24, Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning. These guidelines will be utilized for all undertakings reviewed under the Protocol Agreement.

Survey Strategy

The default survey strategy for undertakings reviewed under the Protocol Agreement will utilize a BLM Class III survey strategy (intensive) with thorough (complete) coverage within the area of potential effect (APE). A deviation from an intensive strategy to a Class II survey strategy (reconnaissance) may be undertaken if identified in an amendment to the Protocol Agreement or through consultation with the California or Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) (Protocol Agreement V.D.1 though 3).

Definitions

Intensive Survey (BLM Class III) - In order to properly identify cultural properties within a proposed undertaking APE, the area should be systematically examined in a manner that would insure the identification of the area's smallest site phenomena. This strategy should be utilized in order to identify all potential National Register of Historic Places properties.

Reconnaissance Survey (BLM Class II) – Sampling and intuitive (predictive) strategies fall within this category. This survey strategy is less intensive, less complete, and does not meet BLM Class III (intensive) survey standards for an entire APE. While portions of an area investigated by reconnaissance survey may have been covered completely, areas not covered and covered less than completely cannot be considered fully inventoried and may be subject to resurvey for future proposed undertakings. Again, a reconnaissance survey (BLM Class II) strategy may be implemented if included in an amendment to the Protocol Agreement or through consultation with SHPO.

Coverage Strategy

In order to insure the identification of sites within the APE of an undertaking, the most appropriate coverage strategy would be complete, unless fully analyzed and documented in a Class II research design in consultation with the SHPO. However, once entering the field, complete survey coverage often becomes impossible due to physical and visual

obstructions. Physical obstructions include steep slopes, dense brush, etc. Visual obstructions include grass cover, duff, etc. Often, the visual problems can be alleviated by removing the grass or duff with a trowel at divisible distances. Physical restraints usually can not be alleviated, so coverage has to be changed on the ground to meet the problem. Due to physical limitations, general or cursory coverage might be warranted. In extreme cases, the area might not be passable at all and would therefore receive no coverage.

Types of Coverage

Complete – This type of coverage is attained by systematically walking over an area, looking for evidence of cultural activity. Transect widths are determined by the investigator with the spacing not as wide as to miss the smallest site phenomena that would occur in the area. It is not sufficient to use spacing widths so wide that it would cause the investigator to inspect specific localities on an intuitive basis. In any case, the appropriate transect width should be determined by considering the anticipated site densities that might be predicted from the literature review, the local environmental and survey conditions, and the types of sites expected to be encountered. In some cases, the appropriate transect width may be as narrow as 5 meters, and in other cases, an adequate transect width could be 15-30 meters. The transect width shall not exceed 30 meters to be considered complete coverage. The appropriate survey strategy and transect width should be determined by Field Office archaeologists certified under the Protocol Agreement and implemented as outlined in consultation with other consulting parties as outlined in the Protocol.

General – This represents an unbiased systematic examination of an area as in complete coverage, but the transect widths are wider due to physical restraints (e.g. steep slopes, talus slopes, dense brush, etc.). The restraint precludes the possibility of conducting 30 meter, or less, transect coverage. This would not assure the identification of the smallest site phenomena (e.g., a small rock art symbol, mining feature, etc.) but insures the area was systematically evaluated and that a good faith effort was made to identify eligible historic resources. Transect width for general coverage shall not exceed 60 meters.

Cursory – Coverage of this type is an unsystematic method of examination. In some areas, physical restraints might be severe enough to prohibit a systematic examination. Coverage in these areas would consist of walking through the areas as permitted by the physical restraints.

An additional important professional responsibility for cultural resources inventories is documentation. Documentation must describe the survey strategies and coverage employed with appropriate maps detailing how the APE was covered.